

Story 08

TWSS HISTORY FILE

Kock Cup

Jacqueline said you wanted some info about the Chicago trip in 2002 for a web page.

I don't seem to have too many photos but I do have a video that I took but it will need editing and I will have to find it as it's in a box with other videos and none are marked as to what they are!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! A job for a rainy afternoon perhaps!



William Koch, an Americas cup winner and sponsor, laid down the gauntlet challenging all Sea Scouts around the world to race for the William I Koch International Sea Scout Cup.

The first competition was to coincide with the anniversary of 90 years of Sea Scouting in USA during the week of August 4th-10th 2002.



The competition was hosted by the Columbia Yacht Club, Chicago and sponsored by the Chicago Area Council BSA.

The cup was commissioned by William Koch and an exact replica of the original Americas cup made by Garrard's of London (just as the original was too).

All races took place on Lake Michigan (one of the Great Lakes). All boats were provided as well as all spars and sails. A fleet of brand new 420's was to be delivered for the competition, and coaching provided during the week by sailing greats such as William Koch, Dawn Riley and Buddy Melges (all Americas cup competitors).

A message was sent to international scouting HQ's "We hope you can join us for the first William I Koch International Sea Scout Cup, where Sea Scouts from around the world will compete for the William I Koch Sea Scout Cup! in a week long competition."

"I wish to have no connection with any ship that does not sail fast, for I intend to go in harm's way."

Trials were held in Britain to find the best British team and 3rd Walsall Sea Scouts were able to provide both helm and crew - Robert Hughes and Bobbie Johnson!

Training began on a reservoir in Oxford with a young lady who was part of the young Olympic squad. She was pleasantly surprised by their ability and fast progress.

These scouts were to represent Great Britain so we thought they should have some publicity. Bruce George our local MP agreed and invited them to tea on the terrace at the Houses of Parliament over looking the Thames. A director of Garrard's brought the cup along for a photo shoot too (before it was shipped to America).

Articles appeared in local newspapers all wishing them luck, and Bruce George wrote to them with his best wishes too.

Accommodation was provided at a nearby university campus and transport to and from the yacht club each day by coach.

Each day we had breakfast at 6am followed by parade and inspection in full uniform and on the water by 7.30. There were 3 races each morning, lunch brought out by rib and

eaten on the water and 3 races each afternoon.

When a boat wasn't racing they were being coached.

It was a gruelling regime with one afternoon off only due to weather conditions.

They had a debrief after their evening meal each day then early to bed with one exception - the celebratory dinner and prize giving at the end of the week. This was an amazing event with the American flag piped in and all Americans present had their fists across their chests swearing their allegiance.

The cup went to the American team from Chicago, they were amongst the oldest scouts too so they had familiarity as well as age on their side, but they were good!

The New Zealand team beat GB by 1 point to 2nd place.

So GB took 3rd place which was a good place to be out of 22 teams and one of the youngest competitors too!

Yet again 3rd Walsall were up there with the best!

Sailing conditions were poor the whole week, it's not called "Windy City" for nothing!

I was on rescue boat duty for the week in an Avon inflatable. It was like white water rafting every day! it was so choppy!

Boats were capsizing on a regular basis and without the buoyancy of salt water would turtle almost immediately.

The course was not small and a rescue boat was put in the vicinity of each buoy, and it was needed.

They sailed fast and they went in harms way!

It was an extremely well organised event and a privilege to attend as the leader in charge of the GB team.

I hope this is of use to you Griff. I will let you have what photos I have and the video.
Speak soon. Glen.